

Old Dominion University's

F. Ludwig Diehn Concert Series



Maniacal 4

**Nick Laufer, Carl Lundgren,
Alex Dubrov and Matt Jefferson**

Concert: Oct. 17, 8 p.m.

Master Class: Oct. 18, 12:30 p.m.

Wilson G. Chandler Recital Hall
F. Ludwig Diehn Center for the Performing Arts



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Biographies

A little irreverent, a lot talented, **Maniacal 4** is dedicated to creating musical performances that not only entertain and engage, but challenge the limits of traditional concert presentation. The lively, acclaimed trombone quartet not only rocks the standard repertoire, but also embraces a wide variety of music from around the world and across eras. M4's clever, insightful arrangements of music ranging from pop/rock and jazz to classical masterpieces bring new life to familiar tunes, often with a tongue-in-cheek playfulness that belies the technical aplomb of the group's four, highly-trained trombonists – Nick Laufer, Carl Lundgren, Alex Dubrov, and Matt Jefferson.

The four musicians got together as freshmen at the University of North Texas. Since the group's official launch in 2006 Maniacal 4 has performed at music festivals on three continents. Concerts frequently feature a diverse cast of guest artists as well as lively improvisations and audience participation, including special requests. Innovative performances of rock blockbusters are audience favorites, and live M4 performances of "Bohemian Rhapsody" and "Carry On Wayward Son" have gone viral on YouTube and reddit.

While M4 has been lauded as "Four great musicians telling one unified, inspiring musical story after another," the members of the group are ardent collaborators as well. M4 frequently joins forces with an array of other musicians and ensembles, from concert bands to vocal choirs. Committed to the idea of making music accessible, the members of the group also work frequently with young musicians of all ages at schools and universities across the country. In addition, M4 started a popular YouTube video series called "Hotel Jams" as a way to make music videos on tour, often with people of all ages and from varying walks of life. The videos feature repertoire ranging from Bob Dylan and jazz standards to

novelties like "Frosty the Snowman" (this one was cranked out quickly at the top of a Colorado mountain before their slides completely froze in place!) and consist of simply arranged songs played by ear in casual, everyday environments. "Hotel Jams" reflects the group's philosophy that music is a vital part of human experience that should be explored and shared by everyone.

Maniacal 4 is sponsored by Buffet Group USA and DANSR, Inc., and performs exclusively on Antoine Courtois Paris trombones and Denis Wick mouthpieces.



Nick Laufer is the rare freelance musician with enviable facility and proven success across a wide range of musical styles. His enthusiasm and experience ranges from early Baroque to contemporary, from rock and jazz to Latin. Best known for his lead work in the professional trombone quartet Maniacal 4, Nick has performed hundreds of concerts in venues around the world. He also tours with country music superstar Toby Keith and he can play a mean sackbut, with engagements that include performances at the internationally-renowned Boston Early Music Festival. Acclaimed for his lyrical style and warm, burnished tone, Nick's playing can be heard on numerous recordings and streaming platforms, and his television appearances include "CBS Late Night with Stephen Colbert" and "CMT Ultimate Kickoff Party." Born in Columbus, Ohio, Nick is a graduate of the University of North Texas, where he met the other three trombonists of Maniacal 4. He currently lives in Nashville and when he's not playing trombone, likes to drink coffee and perfect his breakfast creations.



Biographies

Carl Lundgren is best known as the tenor voice of Maniacal 4, as well as the group's resident "musical tinkerer." A versatile musician with a hearty appetite for exploration and experimentation, Carl is M4's innovative composer and arranger, responsible for the extraordinary variety and authenticity of the group's clever and catchy versions of everything from Biebl to Bartok to recent hit pop/rock tunes. His rendition of "Carry On Wayward Son" played by the group is nearing 2 million views on YouTube. Carl is also the insightful facilitator of many of M4's novel initiatives, including a range of collaborative projects, and he is active as a composer/arranger for a variety of other musical ensembles as well.

A native Swedish speaker, Carl grew up in Calgary, Alberta and maintains dual Canadian-Swedish citizenship. He started his musical journey as a child studying piano and added the flute in 7th grade before switching to trombone a year later to play in jazz band. He's never looked back. A resident of Denton, Texas, he is a graduate of the University of North Texas, where he also taught as an adjunct professor. He continues to teach privately, offering master classes and participating in numerous education/outreach projects. An active freelancer, he is a member of the American Jazz Composers' Orchestra and the Mars Hill Band. He has an abiding fascination for logic problems, puzzles, board games, clever structures, and the endlessly fascinating subjectivity of human experience.



Alex Dubrov is the ensemble's electric trombone expert. His skills as a soloist combined with his expertise in using pedal distortion allow him to create some of M4's most sonically vibrant fusions of jazz, pop and rock. His electronically synthesized trombone sound defines much of M4's rock tribute material, enabling dead-on imitations of guitar legends such as Jimmy Page and Tommy Shaw. Currently residing in Dallas, Alex is an active

freelancer in the Dallas-Fort Worth area on both tenor and bass trombone. Credits include performances with a variety of jazz and pop luminaries, including Aretha Franklin and Earth, Wind & Fire's Bobby Burns, Jr., and he is a popular figure in numerous cover bands. In addition to maintaining his own studio, where he teaches trombone, tuba and euphonium, Alex is pursuing electronic music production.

Originally from Kiev, Ukraine, Alex moved to Texas at the age of 10 and is a graduate of the University of North Texas. He is an avid cultural enthusiast with a steadfast curiosity in languages. Fluent in Russian and English, he is also learning Portuguese and Spanish. After years of playing trombone in a Latin band, he is now taking his musicality to the dance floor, learning salsa and bachata. A health-conscious vegetarian, Alex is also a molecular hydration specialist, consulting with people suffering from degenerative diseases.



While **Matt Jefferson** is best known as the bass voice of Maniacal 4, his versatility extends to classical and commercial music as well. Equally versed on bass trombone and tuba, he has performed with the Louisiana Philharmonic, the Acadiana Symphony Orchestra, and the Grammy-nominated One O'Clock Lab Band. A graduate of University of North Texas, Matt spent three years in Louisiana, where in addition to playing, he taught at Nicholls State University.

A lynchpin of Maniacal 4's musical foundation in more ways than one, Matt is the group's video production guru and the forward-thinking "people person." A student of life, Matt is an enthusiastic sports fan and self-confessed bookworm whose tastes range from Malcolm Gladwell to Christopher Moore. Originally from London, Ontario, Matt grew up in Calgary and now lives in Toronto with his wife and four cats.

Biographies

Stockton Helbing is not very good at sitting still. When not drumming he works as a composer, arranger, producer, band leader, educator, music director, author and entrepreneur.

Stockton has released six albums and has performed and recorded with a wide range of artists including Doc Severinsen, Maynard Ferguson, Maniacal 4, Erykah Badu, David Braid, Steve Wiest, Jennifer Holliday, the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Denis DiBlasio, the Cincinnati Pops, Chip McNeill, Darden Purcell, Clay Jenkins, Phil Woods, Wayne Bergeron, Randy Brecker, the Imperial Brass, Mary Wilson, Paul Tynan, Ernie Watts and many more.

Stockton currently teaches drum set at the University of North Texas as an adjunct professor of music. Since 2007, he has owned and operated Armored Records, an independent jazz record label that focuses on releases by up-and-coming jazz artists. To date, Armored Records has released over 50 albums from artists coast to coast.



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